

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 have been amended and are under consideration.

As stated in the specification, page 2, paragraph [0005], the present invention provides a quick connect fitting for an electrical junction box consisting of a one-piece zinc die casting fitting having the snap-in capability described in U.S. Patent No. 5,171,164 without requiring a spring steel member.

This is accomplished by making the one-piece die cast fitting with flexible locking fingers 180° apart and tensioning fingers adjacent to and on either side of each locking finger. The tensioning fingers 21 are separated from the locking fingers 20 by notches 19 (see Fig. 2). The notches form the edges of adjacent fingers, whereby that the fingers can flex to permit the one-piece die cast fitting to be engaged in an opening of a junction box.

All of the claims under consideration include the features of: 1) a one-piece die cast fitting, and 2) notches separating the locking fingers from the adjacent tensioning fingers and forming the edges of adjacent fingers, whereby the fingers can flex to permit the one-piece die cast fitting to be engaged in the opening of the junction box.

The references do not disclose the claimed features. In both instances, the snap-in function is achieved by making the fingers of spring steel. Gretz and O'Neil et al., whether considered singly or in combination, fail to disclose the features that make it possible to die cast a one-piece fitting with flexible fingers that provide a snap-in function.

Turning specifically to the references, the Gretz patent 6,144,630 discloses a member 20 made of spring steel (col. 2, lines 42-43). There are three locking fingers and three tensioning fingers. The locking fingers and tensioning fingers are not separated by notches which form the edges of adjacent fingers. This patent does not provide a teaching of how to make a one-piece die cast fitting with flexible fingers.

The O'Neil et al. patent 5,373,106 discloses a connector construction embodying a separately formed, spring steel adapter ring, the construction of which is quite similar to U.S. 5,171,164 cited on page 2 of the present specification. Although Figs. 24-28 show two locking fingers and two tensioning fingers, the tensioning fingers are not separated from the locking fingers by notches which form the edges of adjacent fingers. Thus, the O'Neil et al. patent, like Gretz, does not provide a teaching of how to make a one-piece die cast body with flexible fingers.

In summary of the above, neither Gretz nor O'Neil et al. disclose a one-piece die cast body having flexible fingers. In Gretz, the fingers are formed in a tubular body of spring steel. In the case of O'Neil et al., the flexible fingers are formed in split ring of spring steel. The patents, whether considered singly or in combination, do not show or suggest a one-piece member having flexible locking and tensioning fingers separated by notches which form the edges of adjacent fingers. As pointed out above, it is this construction that makes it possible to form flexible fingers in a one-piece die cast body.

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In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are patentable over the references and that the present application should be passed to issue.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 35591.

Respectfully submitted,

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